

**RESOURCE ADVISORY COUNCIL (RAC)**  
**FINAL MINUTES**  
**August 18, 2004**

**BLM National Training Center**  
**9828 North 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue**  
**Phoenix, Arizona**

**MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:** Frances Werner, Mary Dahl, Lee Aitken, Sanford Cohen, Steve Saway, Peggy Titus, Tina Clark, Lamar Smith, Ty Kelly, Glen Collins, Sandee McCullen, Rick Holloway, Bill Branan

**ABSENT:** Lorraine Eiler, Larry Nelson

**BLM STAFF IN ATTENDANCE:** Carl Rountree, Mike Taylor, Teri Raml, Bonnie Winslow, Bill Civish, Tom Zale, Mike Henderson, Shela McFarlan, Bill Coulloudon, Ron Hooper, Roger Taylor, Gary Stumpf, Chris Tincher, Karen Simms, Keith Hughes, McKinley-Ben Miller, Bill Gibson, Deborah Stevens, Lynn Jackson

**PRESENTERS & GUESTS:** Walt Meyers, University of Arizona

**AGENDA ITEM: Meeting called to Order.** (Frances Werner, RAC Chairperson)  
Welcome and Introduction of RAC Members.

**DISCUSSION:** The Chair called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. on the morning of August 18, 2004 at the BLM National Training Center. Frances thanked everyone for attending. Greetings and introductions were then made around the room.

**AGENDA ITEM: Review May 26, 2004 meeting minutes.**

**DISCUSSION:** Frances Werner made the motion to approve the minutes; Lamar Smith seconded the motion.

**ACTION: Motion carried**

**AGENDA ITEM: BLM State Director's Introduction, Update on Legislation, Regulations, and other Statewide Issues.** (Carl Rountree, BLM Arizona Associate State Director and other BLM staff.)

**DISCUSSION:** Carl Rountree welcomed RAC, BLM staff and visiting guests to RAC meeting on behalf of State Director Elaine Zielinski, who has been called to jury duty. Following are his talking points:

**Arizona BLM 2004 Fire Outlook:** So far this year, fire restrictions remain in effect on BLM lands along both sides of the lower Colorado River and on the Arizona Strip. The remaining restrictions that had been

in place statewide have been lifted. On the Arizona Strip, 105 lightning fires have burned about 1,900 acres and seven human-caused fires have totaled less than two acres altogether. On the Phoenix/Kingman Zone, all fires have been contained, including 11 started by lightning and 30 caused by humans. Safford/Tucson reports no significant fire activity as recent precipitation has reduced fire danger to moderate. There has not been a single lightning-caused fire in the Yuma/Lake Havasu zone this year; however, 55 human-caused fires have burned about 1,425 acres.

**Update on Airtanker Restrictions:** If you recall on May 10, 2004, the Forest Service and Department of the Interior announced they were terminating the contract for 33 large airtankers due to concerns over airworthiness of the aircraft and public safety. The decision came in response to findings and recommendations by the 2004 National Transportation and Safety Board (NTSB) report on three previous airtanker accidents.

On July 2, 2004, five airtankers, ex-Navy P-3 Orion aircraft, returned to firefighting service. The decision was the result of a safety analysis performed on eight aircraft, and inspections are continuing on the other three. The ex-Navy P-3 Orion aircraft are owned by Aero Union Corporation in Chico, California.

DynCorp Technical Services provided the expert analysis, and has worked to research the operations and maintenance records of these aircraft, and performed a thorough site visit to examine them. With better information, and a precedent set for more thorough inspections by the contractors, Forest Service and BLM officials believe they can operate this equipment safely this fire season.

Recently, Interior and Agriculture returned two P-2V aircraft to firefighting service on a limited basis. Both aircraft will be outfitted with structural health monitoring devices to gather information on the stresses that occur to airtankers in the fire environment. These devices will help determine vital safety information for the remaining P-2V fleet.

The current fleet consists of 800 firefighting aircraft, including a mix of large and small airplanes and helicopters. In June, USDA and DOI contracted with private companies for more than 100 aircraft to ensure firefighting effectiveness this season. The two airtankers join seven P-3 Orion aircraft that were returned to service following a thorough safety analysis. The remaining 10 aircraft in the P-2V fleet will not be returned to service until their safety level has been determined.

**Update on Military Affairs Commission: Military Affairs Commission:** On July 15th, Luke AFB announced the first real estate acquisition by the Air Force for the Luke AFB Land Acquisition Program with the purchase of 143 acres of land near the base's munitions storage area. The parcel was acquired from Sun Health Properties for \$950,000.

The Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Arizona State Legislature, Representative Jake Flake appointed Mrs. Nancy Stump to the commission to represent the State House.

Under the guidance of the Commission, BLM will participate with the State of Arizona, Department of Defense, United States Air Force, United States Army Corp of Engineers, and the private sector, as they work toward the goals of the Governor's initiative. The next quarterly meeting of the commission will be Tuesday, August 24, in Sierra Vista. Congressman Jim Kolbe is scheduled to attend and address the commission.

**Update on Organizational Effectiveness:** A package was submitted to the Washington Office for review and approval. Last month, the Colorado River District was approved and efforts are now underway to implement it using the existing field office staffs. There will be no “net” increase in staff.

To augment these efforts, we will soon designate an acting District Manager. Announcements for the three field office managers have closed and the State Office will begin processing the applications next week, but selections will not be made until the District Manager has been selected. The announcement for the District Manager closes in one week and we hope to make a selection by the end of September.

The Arizona Strip has received approval for its model from the State Office and is beginning to develop a transitional table of organization for the Washington Office’s review and approval. Both the Safford and Tucson Field Offices and the Phoenix Field Office are still developing their three-tier models and will complete these by the end of the month. As we have stated before, the intention is to have all four districts approved by the end of this fiscal year and the three-tier organization in place by the end of the calendar year.

**Annual Arizona Cattlegrowers Association:** The annual Arizona Cattlegrowers was held July 25 – 28 in Prescott, Arizona. In her talking points, BLM Arizona State Director provided an update on the Grazing Regulations, Monitoring MOU, drought outlook and Burro Management Status. In addition, the Federal Lands Policy Session included several other guest speakers from different agencies. These speakers and topics included:

**Mark Rey:** USDA Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment - Administration accomplishments under the Healthy Forests Initiative and Healthy Forests Restoration Act

**USFS Report:** Forest Service Range Program Lead from Washington, D.C. and Harv Forsgren – Region 3 Forester - Update on re-stocking the Tonto National Forest after a 2 year drought closure

Public Land Council: Jeff Eisenberg, Executive Director/Public Lands from Washington, D.C. - Accomplishments this year and the importance of the BLM/Forest Service monitoring Memorandum of Understanding

**Secretarial Visit:** Secretary Norton was recently in Arizona to meet with Congressman Renzi and his constituents in Safford. While in Phoenix, she had several media interviews to address the current wildland fire situation, and President’s Healthy Forest and National Fire plans, and Interior’s support for those plans. State Director Elaine Zielinski attended the media events, including an editorial board meeting with the East Valley Tribune News, an interview with the Arizona Capitol Times, and several television and radio interviews.

**Director’s Visit:** Next week, Director Clarke will be visiting Flagstaff and the Arizona Strip for several days. While she is there, she will be recognizing the to the Southwest Condor Working Group for their collaborative efforts to restore the endangered species in the Arizona. She will also be visiting the Vermillion Cliffs National Monument to see the resources of the Arizona Strip.

**OMB Representative Tour:** BLM will also be hosting Ben Burnette from the Office of Management and Budget, and Steve Tryon from Washington BLM, for a tour to several National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS) units in Arizona. They will tour the San Pedro, Las Cienegas National Conservation Areas, and the Ironwood Forest, Vermillion Cliffs and Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monuments. In addition, they will have an opportunity to tour the Border Patrol Station in Naco, Arizona, and learn more about the border issues BLM is facing. Also, they will be visiting with BLM

staff on the military encroachment and other land management issues BLM is currently helping to resolve.

**RAC Annual Work Plan:** Elaine has asked Mike Taylor and the Resources staff to work with the RAC to develop an annual work plan for the new fiscal year. This plan will outline the priority work the RAC could provide advice and assistance to BLM. It is very timely to get the RAC engaged in this exercise, so we all have a focus for FY 05's planned activities. As a starting point, Deborah Stevens and Mike Taylor have developed a template with some preliminary action and informational items for your consideration. However, we do want the plan to reflect the RAC's perspectives and expectations. Also, the plan will attempt to outline the FY 05 quarterly meeting schedule to accommodate everyone's busy schedules. Mike Taylor do you have anything you want to add.

- Mike Taylor – supplied a template (modeled after Alaska and Nevada) for RAC review, to line out the focus for next year.
- Action item – see template and get comments back to Mike Taylor/Deb Stevens and possibility of quarterly meetings.

**RAC Recognition and Awards:** I would now like to make some very special presentations for our five out-going RAC members. First, I would like to thank you for getting involved in the RAC and dedicating your time over the past three years to BLM issues. All of us at BLM appreciate your leadership and interest in building a stronger collaborative process in managing Arizona's public land resources.

Secondly, I would like to present each of you with a small token of our appreciation for all your hard work. Lee Aitken – Energy/Minerals representative, Rick Holloway – Commercial Recreation representative, Bill Branan – Environmental representative, Sanford Cohen – Dispersed Recreation representative, and Mary Dahl – Public-At-Large representative. Because of your interest and participation, the BLM has received some excellent advice in several management areas. Thank you again.

**ACTION: N/A**

**AGENDA ITEM: Update on the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Antiquities Act** (Gary Stumpf, BLM Cultural Resources Program Lead)

**DISCUSSION: PowerPoint Presentation** – A new BLM web page (not public yet, pending WO approval), will include all publications and links to Heritage Education; Want to Help; Take a Vacation to the Past; Research and Collection. BLM wants to revitalize public interest in cultural heritage using programs and sites that already exist. The site will be maintained in WO with 4 program leads from New Mexico, Idaho, Oregon, and Arizona responsible for cultural heritage portion of web page. All Field Offices have/will identify sites/programs for inclusion. The sites will be further broken down to public and educational/research sites and sites for revitalization and stabilization.

**ACTION: N/A (Pending Washington office approval for launch and maintenance thereafter).**

**AGENDA ITEM: BLM Stewardship Contracting** (McKinley-Ben Miller, BLM Forestry, Stewardship contracting and Biomass Utilization Lead)

**DISCUSSION:** McKinley-Ben provided an overview of what Stewardship Contracting is and how it helps BLM meet its multiple use resource mission. Stewardship Contracting is a new tool that Congress has given to the BLM for managing and restoring forest and woodlands. With this new authority, contained in the 2003 Appropriations Act, the agency can more completely address the total ecological needs of an area by using common sale contracts, service contracts, agreements as well as stewardship contracts. The agency describes the “end result” it wants to achieve in a certain area. The contractor then develops a mutually agreed-upon plan of actions to achieve that goal. Stewardship contracting also allows the agency to enter into multi-year contracts and to use the value of products removed to offset some or all of the costs of the overall work accomplished. Finally, with stewardship contracting, the agency is encouraged to work with the local community to design and implement the contract, and in the process, build community capacity and bring jobs and income into the local community. **Stewardship Handout Provided**

**ACTION:**

**AGENDA ITEM: University of Arizona Project on collecting and Interpreting Rangeland Monitoring Data** (Walt Meyers, University of Arizona – Extension Service)

**DISCUSSION:** Walt Meyer gave a presentation covering the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension's monitoring project with the Arizona's Cattle Growers, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, National Resource Conservation Service and State Land Department. The monitoring project covers 10 allotments containing BLM, Forest Service, State Lands and private lands. The allotments selected represent all the Major Land Resource Areas and Resource Units in Arizona. BLM/FS approved-monitoring protocols will be used to develop recommended approaches or study designs for collecting and interpreting monitoring data as a basis for management planning and decision making in Arizona.

**ACTION:** RAC is interested in the progress of the University’s project, and would like periodic updates.

**AGENDA ITEM: Public Comment Period - None**

**DISCUSSION:** None

**ACTION:** N/A

**AGENDA ITEM: Arizona Land Use Planning Update** (Michael Taylor, BLM Deputy State Director for Resources)

**DISCUSSION:** Mike provided the significant updates to the land use plans in process.

**Agua Fria National Monument and Bradshaw - Harquahala Land Use Plans** - The scoping report was approved in February 2003. First round of Alternative Formulation workshops (five) were held the week of March 3. Approximately 50 participants attended each meeting. A second round of public workshops on alternative formulation was conducted during the first week of April 2003. The alternative formulation and impact analysis stages are nearing completion. **The Draft RMP/Draft EIS is currently**

**being reviewed by the State Office. The NOA for the Draft RMP/Draft EIS should be published September or October 2004.**

**Sonoran Desert National Monument and Phoenix South Land Use Plans** - Public meetings to develop alternatives were held during January and February 2004. State Office review of the alternatives is scheduled to begin in December 2004. **The NOA for the Draft RMP/Draft EIS is scheduled to be published on July 1, 2005.**

**Lake Havasu Land Use Plan** - The RMP/EIS planning effort is nearing completion of the alternative formulation and impact analysis stages, and the NOA for the Draft RMP/Draft EIS should be published late Fall 2004.

**Grand Canyon Parashant National Monument/Vermilion Cliffs National Monument/Arizona Strip Field Office Land Use Plans** -The RMP/EIS planning effort is nearing completion of the alternative formulation and impact analysis stages, and the NOA for the Draft RMP/Draft EIS is scheduled to be published in October 2004.

**Ironwood Forest National Monument Land Use Plan** - The RMP/EIS planning effort is in the alternative formulation stage, and the NOA for the Draft RMP/Draft EIS is scheduled to be published on May 27, 2005.

**Las Cienegas National Conservation Area Land Use Plan** - The Approved RMP and Record of Decision were signed on July 25, 2003 by the Arizona State Director. An Implementation Strategy is being developed with the assistance of the Sonoita Valley Planning Partnership (SVPP) and others.

**Arizona LUP Amendment for Fire, Fuels and Air Quality Management** - The notice of availability (NOA) for the Proposed LUP Amendment, Finding of No Significant Impact and Environmental Assessment was published April 9, 2004. Release of the NOA began the 30-day protest period on the Proposed LUP Amendment, which closed on May 10, 2004. No letters of protest were received. **The NOA for the Approved LUP Amendment and Decision Record is scheduled for September 2004.**

**Yuma Land Use Plan** - The Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare the land use plan was published in the Federal Register on March 30, 2004. Four public scoping meetings were held during the first week of June 2004. These meetings were held in Yuma, AZ, Quartzsite, AZ, Wellton, AZ, and Blythe, CA. **The scoping report should be approved before the end of the fiscal year (September 30, 2004). This planning effort will be a contracted, and the contract should be awarded by any day.**

**San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area and Tucson Field Office Land Use Plans** - The Tucson RMP will address all remaining BLM administered lands not covered by the Las Cienegas NCA, Ironwood Forest National Monument, and San Pedro RNCA RMPs. **The Preparation Plan, which guides the development of the RMP, should be approved in September 2004. The Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare both land use plans should be published in October 2004. The scoping report should be approved during the first half of fiscal year 2005. This planning effort will be a contracted, and the contract should be awarded by late Fall 2004.**

**Handout Provided, which contains a comprehensive status update for all the plans.**

**ACTION: Provide standard update at the next RAC meeting.**

**AGENDA ITEM: BLM Field Manager Office Rangeland Resource Team Member Proposals** (#2 Shela McFarlin and #1 Roger Taylor) See Handouts for nominations. Received from Shela at the last meeting.

**DISCUSSION:** #1 Motion made by Rick Holloway to accept new nominations as stated, seconded by Sanford Cohen. #2 Motion made by Sandee McCullen to accept without changes to proposal, seconded by Mary Louise Dahl.

**ACTION:** #1 Motion carried. #2 Motion carried.

**AGENDA ITEM: RAC Questions on Field Manager Reports** (*Reports are at the bottom of the minutes*)

**DISCUSSION:** RAC provided some feedback on their experiences working with the Forest Service in several projects. They would like to get more information on the “Service First” initiative and the Las Cienegas proposal at the next RAC meeting

**ACTION:** Provide overview of “Service First” and update RAC on talks with Forest Service.

**AGENDA ITEM: Report from the Standards & Guidelines Working Group** (Lamar Smith, Chair)

**DISCUSSION:** The S&G subcommittee discussed four issues:

- 1) Grazing Regulation Revisions – Bill Coulloudon gave an update on the status of the proposed revisions to the grazing regulations. He indicated the final EIS will be released in September. The ROD is due out in October and the regulations will go into effect in December, 2004.
- 2) Procedures for Recruiting and Appointing RRT Members. The subcommittee agreed to establish some additional guidelines for the recruitment and guidance of RRT members. These guidelines will be developed by the subcommittee and presented to the full RAC for consideration at the next meeting.
- 3) Nature Conservancy Review of Literature on Grazing in the Sonoran Desert. This review is presently out for review. The subcommittee agreed that it wants to submit review comments. Subcommittee members were supplied a copy of the document. Anyone who wants to make comments should send them via email to Lamar Smith, who will attempt to organize the comments and submit them. Comments are due back to TNC by September 8, but it may not be possible for us to meet that deadline.
- 4) Monitoring on Las Cienegas. There was some concern over the role of TNC in evaluating monitoring data and methods on the Las Cienegas area. The concern was that procedures and data interpretation should, to the extent possible, be consistent with methods used elsewhere, and that BLM’s management needs be fully addressed. This issue was discussed with Shela McFarlin, Karen Simms, Keith Hughes, and Grant Drennan. It was agreed that some further consultation would be desirable to include range monitoring specialists from various groups, including BLM, NRCS, Audubon, TNC, U of A, etc.

**ACTION:** Procedures for Recruiting and Appointing RRT Members will be provided at next RAC meeting. The S&G will also provide feedback for Nature Conservancy literature review. Followup on monitoring plans on Las Cienegas.

**AGENDA ITEM: RAC Discussion on Public Relations Working Group** (Steve Saway, Chair)

**DISCUSSION:** Steve will be preparing a quarterly RAC Notes to include information on the new RAC members for distribution in November or December.

**ACTION:** Send Draft RAC Notes to Public Relations Working Group for review.

**AGENDA ITEM: RAC Discussion on Recreation Working Group** (Tina Clark, Chair)

**DISCUSSION:** The Recreation Working Group met with Don Applegate, BLM Recreation Program Lead in Arizona, to discuss getting involved in updating the Arizona Recreation Strategy or providing Arizona input to the National Recreation Strategy. (?) *(Tina, I need to get a complete summary of your report for last meeting.)*

**ACTION:** Follow up discussion to provide input to National Recreation Strategy (?)

**AGENDA ITEM: Report from Wild Horse and Burro Working Group** (Frances Werner, Chair)

**DISCUSSION:** Lee Aitken & Mike Taylor provided comments regarding reprogramming and additional \$226,000 dollars were reprogrammed. BLM removed 400 more burros making a total of 615. First time ever that AZ BLM will be in a maintenance mode. Adoption target includes 300 animals. So far BLM has adopted 198 with three adoptions before end of year to go. We expect to make the goal. Construction of new Kingman holding facility is going forward. The new facility will hold 500 animals.

**Questions/Answers**

1. There 36,000 horses/burros on public lands. How many now in Sanctuary? There are 14,000 animals in seven sanctuaries now, with three more in October 2004. These new facilities will have capacity for 6,600 more animals.
2. Doesn't removal from public land only mean more animals in Sanctuary? No, because 9,000 animals are to be collected in FY 2004, 5,000 will be adopted or sent to the BLM facilities or sanctuary.
3. Is the annual cost/animal in corrals or Sanctuary going to increase? The annual cost will not increase in the sanctuary, because the contracts set the cost per day.
4. Herd reduction on public lands can lead to a greater reproduction rate than 20%. Has this been considered? Experience shows 20-25% growth even after animals are removed. Yes, changes in growth rate have been considered.
5. Are animals in corrals/sanctuary neutered? If not, then has this confined animal herd increase been accounted for? Yes males are gelded. Males go to one sanctuary and females to another. Males are not necessarily gelded for adoptions.
6. Planning on increasing adoptions may be risky. There is a finite number of potential adopters in the U.S. What contingency planning has been done to deal with diminishing adoptions? BLM has not seen diminishing adoption trends. Based on historical information, BLM has seen a steady annual adoption rate of 7,000 animals per year.
7. Fertility Control – a tool for maintaining Appropriate Management Level (AML) of herds. The field testing appears quite anemic. 570 mares in field tests for 2004: How many were on public land? How many were in confinement? They were all on public land. BLM is about to release a



contract for 3-4 year vaccine. It does not appear to be a good tool for reduction, but good for AML maintenance.

8. Where is the lobbying effort to streamline the vaccine approval process through the FDA? It appears to be MIA. BLM is working under Human Society certification for application of research vaccine. BLM is still researching and developing the vaccine and don't anticipate the research to be concluded in the near future.

**ACTION: N/A**

**AGENDA ITEM: Report from Planning Working Group (Mary Dahl, Chair)**

**DISCUSSION:** The BLM provided comprehensive updates on the on-going planning efforts, including extensive discussion with the RAC on the alternative development for the Agua Fria National Monument and Bradshaw – Harquahala and Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument/Vermillion Cliffs National Monument/Arizona Strip Field Office land use plans. RAC is looking forward to providing comments when the draft resource management plans and environmental impact statements are released this fall.

**ACTION: N/A**

**AGENDA ITEM: Report from Off-Highway Vehicle Use Working Group (Sandee McCullen, Chair)**

**DISCUSSION:** Sandee has concerns about in-put from OHV community during draft resource management plan and environmental impact statement public comment period?

On a separate subject, Bill Gibson provided an update on the Adopt-A-Trail Partnerships – proposed through a partnership with Arizona's Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) enthusiasts and organizations.

The Adopt-A-Trail concept will include volunteers (individuals and clubs) and will a) monitor selected and agreed upon routes, b) maintain selected and agreed upon routes. Maintenance would include sign installation and maintenance, bushing, repair erosion/washout problems; c) foster public stewardship of the land (public education, "peer" patrol), and d) develop and test "best practices" for an Adopt-A-Trail program. The current status is the Adopt-A-Trail pilot program will be developed and implemented in conjunction with a Recreational Trails Program grant.

**ACTION: N/A**

**AGENDA ITEM: Summary of RAC Recommendations for Director Clarke's "Best Practices" (Frances Werner, RAC Chair)**

**DISCUSSION:** Frances reported she received comments from several RAC members, and provided a list of those "Best Practices" recommendations on how BLM can improve customer service and resource management. She will be forwarding the consolidated list to the RAC National Coordinator on August 25, 2004, for the BLM Director's consideration. **Handout was provided.**

**ACTION: N/A**

**AGENDA ITEM: Discussion on Future Quarterly Meetings/Locations** (BLM State Director and RAC Members) Committees meet day before starting at 11 am. Meetings in between also conference calls are an option & e-mail.

**DISCUSSION:**

**ACTION:** Next meeting in Phoenix October 26 & 27, 2004. Committee meetings on 10/26 and RAC meeting on 10/27/04

**MEETING ADJOURNED August 18, 2004 @ 4:45 pm**

**Arizona Resource Advisory Council Meeting - August 18, 2004**

**Arizona Strip Field Office Manager Report**

**1. SUBJECT: Grand Canyon Trust and Conservation Fund to purchase Kane Ranch**

**ISSUE SUMMARY:** The Grand Canyon Trust, aided by The Conservation Fund, has acquired a one-year purchase option to the Kane and Two Mile Ranches on the Arizona Strip from the Kane Ranch Land Stewardship and Cattle Company. This purchase includes 333,000 acres of BLM grazing lands, 550,000 acres of U.S. Forest Service lands, and 950 deeded acres. The purchase includes about 470 acres of deeded land within the BLM's Vermilion Cliffs National Monument, along with the majority of grazing allotments and water rights within the Monument. The acquisition includes 23,869 AUMs from BLM allotments and 7,476 AUMs from Forest Service allotments.

The Trust and The Conservation Fund have stated publicly that they will be "restoring" the Kane and Two-Mile ranches, which have been "hit hard by grazing and drought." Monitoring by the Arizona Strip BLM and the North Kaibab District of the Kaibab National Forest has shown these ranches are actually in good ecological condition. Although this area was overgrazed more than 100 years ago, the ranches have been well-managed for the past 40 years. BLM and USFS have made it clear to the Trust and The Conservation Fund that the grazing permits they are acquiring will not be retired. If they do not use the permits, other parties may apply for the AUMs in these areas. Bill Hedden, the Trust's Executive Director, has acknowledged this and stated that they intend to manage these ranches as sustainable, working ranches.

**2. SUBJECT: California condor chick confirmed in the Vermilion Cliffs**

**ISSUE SUMMARY:** Biologists have confirmed that the two condor nests in Arizona each contain a chick. One pair is nesting in the Vermilion Cliffs National Monument, the other in the Grand Canyon. So far the chicks appear healthy, and biologists expect them to fledge in the late fall. The Southwest Condor Working Group, which includes BLM, will receive a 4Cs Award from Kathleen Clarke August 24 in Flagstaff.

**3. SUBJECT: Arizona Strip Range and Resource Team Nominations**

**ISSUE SUMMARY:** The Arizona Strip Field Office mailed 1,101 letters seeking nominations for its Range and Resource Team in June, 2004. The four nomination letters received are included in the briefing

packet for that agenda item. A fifth letter from The Nature Conservancy suggested including someone from the Grand Canyon trust, but it was not more specific.

#### **4. SUBJECT: Draft EIS for Arizona Strip planning effort due this fall**

**ISSUE SUMMARY:** Draft management plans for the Vermilion Cliffs and Grand-Canyon Parashant National Monument and 1.7 million acres of BLM public domain on the Arizona Strip are scheduled to be released to the public in October.

### **Phoenix Field Office Manager Report**

#### **1. SUBJECT: Black Canyon Trail**

**ISSUE SUMMARY:** The Phoenix Field Office (PFO) has issued a draft FONSI and Environmental Assessment to amend the *Black Canyon Trail Master Plan* to establish a new alignment for the Black Canyon Trail (BCT) from Table Mesa Road to Rock Creek in the vicinity of Black Canyon City; connect the new alignment to High Desert Park in Black Canyon City; establish several loop trails adjacent to the BCT; construct a trailhead adjacent to Table Mesa Road; designate a portion of the old BCT alignment on two-track jeep trails as a “motorized” BCT; and close two informal firearms shooting sites that pose a hazard to trail users. The PFO is working with a public interest group to coordinate ongoing Black Canyon Trail developments.

#### **2. SUBJECT: PFO Project Report for 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2004**

**ISSUE SUMMARY:** PFO has issued its “Activity Schedule” project report for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter of 2004. The report is a comprehensive list of all new projects, recent decisions, ongoing project planning, and ongoing project implementation occurring during April 1 through June 30, 2004. The report is intended to raise awareness of PFO activities among its stakeholders, and to give the public opportunities to be involved in project scoping. All Resource Advisory Council members were mailed a copy on July 29. Various BLM Arizona State Office and Field Office personnel have indicated an interest in compiling such reports and posting them to the BLM Arizona external website.

#### **3. SUBJECT: Community briefings on the draft “Agua Fria National Monument Plan & Bradshaw Foothills/Harquahala Management Plan Revision.”**

**ISSUE SUMMARY:** PFO staff have traveled to brief community leaders of the Town of Buckeye, Hopi tribal leaders, Yavapai County District 2 Supervisor Lorna Street, Arizona Dept. of Transportation, and Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Dept. as the draft preferred alternative of the Agua Fria-Harquahala plan nears completion.

#### **4. SUBJECT: Route designation for the Sonoran Desert National Monument and Phoenix South Resource Management Plan**

**ISSUE SUMMARY:** PFO staff has been working to compile and complete route designations for the Phoenix South Plan. Designations have been made using an interdisciplinary and interagency team facilitated by a contractor who has developed and practiced the route designation process in other planning efforts around the country.

#### **5. SUBJECT: Maricopa Fence**

**ISSUE SUMMARY:** PFO has consolidated and responded to public comments received on an environmental assessment of a proposed right-of-way grant and fence along state route 238 across the Sonoran Desert National Monument. The proposed right-of-way will grant legal authority to Maricopa County Department of Transportation to maintain state route 238, and require MCDOT to fence the right-of-way to minimize potential livestock-automobile collisions. This right-of-way and fencing requirement is the first in what is expected to be several such requests from MCDOT for county paved and maintained roads throughout the PFO.

## **6. SUBJECT: Livestock Grazing in the Sonoran Desert National Monument**

**ISSUE SUMMARY:** The PFO has received a draft copy of The Nature Conservancy's document, *The Impacts of Livestock Grazing in the Sonoran Desert: A Literature Review*. Currently, the PFO staff is reviewing this draft.

## **7. SUBJECT: Sonoran Desert National Monument Advisory Board**

**ISSUE SUMMARY:** The Sonoran Desert National Monument Advisory Board charter remains in the Washington D.C. Solicitor's office for review.

### **Kingman Field Office Manager Report**

#### **1. SUBJECT: Mining of Split-Estate land (BLM as surface owner, Private as subsurface owner)**

**ISSUE SUMMARY:** Santa Fe Pacific Railroad has conveyed the surface estate for thousands of acres of land across Arizona and adjoining states. Through our many land exchanges, BLM Arizona now holds some of these lands in Federal ownership. Santa Fe Pacific Railroad has also sold some of the subsurface mining rights, which are from the surface to 100 feet deep, to mining operators for lands where BLM owns the surface. Mining operators with subsurface rights are not required to enter mineral materials sales contracts with BLM, pay royalties, or undergo environmental review and requirements for mitigation of environmental impacts, and reclamation of mined lands. This situation is exacerbated by the fact that the Arizona Mined Land Reclamation statutes and rules do not apply to non-metallic mines, such as sand and gravel pits, and aggregate quarries.

Resulting issues and complications include: 1) loss or damage to surface improvement; 2) lack of mitigation for the loss of natural resources; 3) degradation of wildlife habitat and visual resources; and 4) disgruntled local residents and private landowners.

BLM has requested a legal opinion from our solicitor on the ownership position as it relates to these deeded lands, regarding BLM's authority and jurisdiction. BLM is awaiting that opinion.

#### **2. SUBJECT: New BLM Kingman Field Office Building**

**SUMMARY:** The BLM Kingman staff has successfully moved into their new building located off of Hualapai Road. The staff is busy unpacking boxes and getting their individual areas back to normal. The office has been open since August 9. There will be a short ceremony to celebrate our new office location on September 9. The new address is: Bureau of Land Management, BLM Kingman Field Office, 2755 Mission Boulevard, Kingman, Arizona 86401 – Phone: 928-718-3700

### **Safford Field Office Manager Report**

#### **1. SUBJECT: Update on Dos Pobres/San Juan Project**

**ISSUE SUMMARY:** Safford Field Manager Bill Civish signed the Record of Decision (ROD) for the Dos Pobres/San Juan Project on June 29. From the options analyzed in the Final Environmental Impact Statement, the BLM's Preferred Alternative, a land exchange between the BLM and Phelps Dodge, was selected. The Notice of Availability for the ROD was published in regional newspapers and copies of the ROD were mailed to those on the mailing list beginning the week of July 12. The entire document is posted at [www.az.blm.gov](http://www.az.blm.gov). The 45-day public protest period will end on August 30. Through the land exchange, Phelps Dodge would acquire title to approximately 16,297 acres of public lands in the vicinity of the proposed new mine. The BLM would receive approximately 3,867 acres of Phelps Dodge private lands in five counties in Arizona.

## **2. SUBJECT: Survival During the Continuing Drought**

**ISSUE SUMMARY:** The Safford Field Office continues to work with ranchers on management strategies; recent rains have not made an appreciable improvement in the condition of rangelands, which suffer from the ongoing, long-term drought. Ranchers were asked to report actual use and reduce stocking rates or make more intensive management decisions on their livestock operations. Early applications show reduced stocking rates. On those allotments that show problems, BLM is meeting with ranchers on the ground to share monitoring results and seek solutions, then document conditions and proceed as necessary.

Field Manager Bill Civish attended the June 5 meeting of the Graham-Cochise Cattle Growers Association in Willcox to discuss the BLM's ongoing efforts to work closely with grazing permittees who are impacted by the severe drought conditions. He explained the differences between term permits and annual grazing applications, encouraging ranchers to apply for non-use as they reduce their livestock numbers during the drought. He discussed the upcoming Standards and Guidelines assessments and the large number of permits expiring in FY05.

## **3. SUBJECT: Gila Box Improvements Continue**

**ISSUE SUMMARY:** Work that began in May on the Kearny Camp Road continues, improving access to Bonita Creek and the west end of the Gila Box Riparian National Conservation Area (NCA). The focus of improvements will be the area around Dry Canyon and the Boat Take-out Area along the Gila River, Spring Canyon, and steep areas along the road, and access the historic Serna Cabin near the confluence of Bonita Creek and the Gila River. The road improvement project is a joint venture between the Safford Field Office and City of Safford, with the BLM providing funds for the project. This project is one more way that the BLM is trying to improve access and encourage recreation and visitation to the Gila Box. Roadwork is expected to continue for approximately 45 days.

Dry Canyon Floatboat Take-out, currently undeveloped, will have recreation facilities and an improved access road to the river. Site construction includes a toilet, two picnic tables, two stand-up grills, and bulletin board. These facilities will improve the overall recreation experience and provide resource protection to one of the busiest sites in the RNCA.

Safford Field Office and the Coronado National Forest are working together to improve the access road to the Safford-Morenci Trail western trailhead. The midpoint of the Trail crosses the Gila Box RNCA at Bonita Creek. An existing five-mile jeep trail is being improved to provide a more accessible route to the trailhead. The SFO has recently secured a \$25,000 grant to provide much-needed trailbed maintenance for the 18-mile historic trail in fiscal year 2005.

#### **4. SUBJECT: Gila Box Advisory Committee**

**ISSUE SUMMARY:** The Safford Field Office has forwarded a Call for Nominations to the BLM Washington Office for publication in the *Federal Register*. The BLM is seeking to fill four vacancies on the Gila Box Riparian National Conservation Area (NCA) Advisory Committee. Nominations for three of the seven committee positions have been received from the Governor of Arizona and the boards of supervisors in Graham and Greenlee counties. The four remaining members must have expertise related to the management of the NCA; examples include hydrology, wildlife and fisheries biology, cultural resources, outdoor recreation, environmental education, botany, riparian management, watershed science, and related fields. The Safford Field Office will accept nominations until September 30. When the *Federal Register* notice is published, complete information and application forms will be available on the BLM Arizona website.

#### **5. SUBJECT: Aravaipa Planning To Begin**

**ISSUE SUMMARY:** The Safford Field Office is gearing up to begin the Aravaipa Ecosystem Management Plan. The plan will be a partnership between the BLM, TNC, and Arizona Game and Fish Department, with participation from the Arizona State Land Department, Coronado National Forest, San Carlos Apache Tribe, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. An outreach plan is being developed to maximize public input, and open houses will be hosted in a number of Arizona cities and towns in October. Several opportunities for public input via public meetings, subcommittee participation, written comments, and email will be provided throughout the planning process. The Ecosystem Plan will replace the existing Aravaipa Wilderness Management Plan, and will provide guidance for management of several Areas of Critical Environmental Concern. The Nature Conservancy's Aravaipa Canyon Preserve is also included in the planning boundary.

### **Yuma Field Office Manager Report**

#### **1. SUBJECT: Resource Management Plan**

**ISSUE SUMMARY:** The Yuma Field Office (YFO) is progressing on the Resource Management Plan (RMP). The Notice of Intent to prepare an RMP and Environmental Impact Statement was published in the *Federal Register* on March 30, 2004, and the pre-plan was signed by the Associated State Director on April 30, 2004. Open House meetings took place in Yuma, Wellton, Quartzsite, and Blythe the first week of June to identify relevant issues that should be addressed in the planning process. The closing date for comments was June 30. A contract should be awarded by the end of July and YFO anticipates that the majority of the work on the RMP will be accomplished by the contractor. The major issues anticipated are Off-Highway Vehicles and community based collaboration and partnerships. The revised Yuma RMP will give YFO the opportunity to consolidate three resource management plans and several plan amendments.

#### **2. SUBJECT: Sears Point Update**

**ISSUE SUMMARY:** Yuma Field Office continues to work on acquiring land within and adjacent to Sears Point Archaeological District. The Arizona Game and Fish Department acquisition for 200 acres is still in the process and the Arizona State Office is working on submitting the preliminary title opinion to the Solicitor for The Trust for Public Land acquisition of 225 acres. In July, letters were sent to 16 private landowners within and adjacent to Sears Point informing them that BLM is interested in purchasing their land. Two of the landowners have responded and we are in the beginning stages of the acquisition process on 180 acres of private land.

### **3. SUBJECT: Hiking Routes**

**ISSUE SUMMARY:** The Yuma Field Office has been working in partnership with the community to identify hiking routes that will be linked into a trail system. In addition to identifying the more popular hiking routes, work is progressing to install traffic counters and develop visitor registers to quantify the amount of trail use that is occurring. Efforts are also underway to secure legal access to public lands with trail related recreation opportunities. To support these efforts and commemorate their 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the Yuma Rotary Club is sponsoring a hiking route in the Yuma Foothills known as Jester's Trail. The Club will be donating \$3,000 and contributing volunteers to complete environmental clearances and planning for this trail project.

### **4. SUBJECT: Rangeland Health Assessments**

**ISSUE SUMMARY:** In FY 2003, the Yuma Field Office completed Rangeland Health Assessments on 16 allotments and proposed decisions were issued. Protests were received from 1 permittee and 1 lessee and the Center of Biological Diversity protested 11 of the proposed decisions. Final decisions have been issued on the 11 protested decisions. Seven of the decisions are Section 15 allotments with small scattered tracks of public land and the remaining four are for perennial ephemeral allotments.

### **5. SUBJECT: Construction Projects**

**ISSUE SUMMARY:** Yuma Field Office has recently completed several construction projects. Installation has been completed on 4 CXT flush restrooms with 16 fee showers at Squaw Lake Recreation Area and on 5 new CXT vault toilets at North Shore Senator Wash Recreation Area. Solar panel lighting systems have also been installed in campgrounds throughout the Yuma Field Office. Ongoing projects at this time include approximately ¾ of a mile road construction (chip seal) at the entrance of the South Mesa Campground area and installation of a water tank for the Squaw Lake water system.

### **6. SUBJECT: Yuma Field Office Land Use Plan**

**ISSUE SUMMARY:** The Yuma Field Office (YFO) preparation plan and Federal Register Notice of Intent for the revision of the land use plan was sent to Washington the week of January 26, for approval. We anticipate starting the scoping process as soon as the Federal Register Notice is published.

### **7. SUBJECT: Mittry Fire Burned Area Emergency Rehabilitation Project Update**

**ISSUE SUMMARY:** The Mittry Fire Burned Area Emergency Rehabilitation (BAER) project continues to proceed on schedule. Invasive tamarisk has been removed from 140 of the 323 acres planned. YFO met with the planting contractor and the trees being used for re-vegetation will be planted in February. In the spirit of coordination and collaboration, the Bureau of Reclamation and YFO have outlined the irrigation plan for the plantings. YFO is also partnering with Arizona Western College and NAU Yuma on the monitoring effort for this project. The rewards of this partnering are two-fold. Not only will the students learn techniques of biological monitoring, their efforts will also be a substantial contribution to the monitoring aspect of the rehabilitation effort.

A BAER plan amendment was pursued to request an additional \$16,450. This was done to procure additional trees for areas that have become accessible through the vegetation clearing work. In total, 50,000 trees will be planted to augment the native vegetation lost in the wildfire and reduce the chances of reinvasion from Salt cedar (*Tamarix ramosissima*) and future catastrophic wildfires.

## **8. SUBJECT: Mitty South Hazardous Fuels Reduction and Riparian Restoration**

**ISSUE SUMMARY:** YFO represented Arizona BLM at the “Healthy Landscapes, Thriving Communities: Bio-energy and Wood Products” conference in Denver. The Mitty South project received national attention when Rebecca Watson highlighted the biomass utilization effort in her opening keynote address. The BLM is now contracting with the Quechan Indian Tribe to load chipped salt cedar onto trucks and send it to Colmac Energy where it will be used for cogeneration. YFO will also be sending a salt cedar chip sample to the National Renewable Energy Lab so they can analyze its chemical properties and test the fuel wood in a modular mobile energy generation unit.

### **Tucson Field Office Manager Report**

#### **1. SUBJECT: H.R. 4943 -- Pima County Land Adjustment Act**

**ISSUE SUMMARY:** Cong. Grijalva and Cong. Kolbe have introduced this legislation that would allow a land exchange of 1,280 acres federal land southeast of Tucson for these properties (depending on values): Empirita-Simonson in Las Cienegas NCA (2,490 acres) and the Ironwood-Moore property for 600 acres inside the IFNM. In addition, the legislation provides for the transfer of Tumamoc Hill (290 acres of state land), which is desired by Pima County to protect a 100-year-old science study, first to the Secretary and then to Pima County with appropriate compensation. No property appraisals have been completed and little environmental information has been collected.

#### **2. SUBJECT: Service First Proposal**

**ISSUE SUMMARY:** The U.S. Forest Service Coronado National Forest and the Tucson Field Office are drafting an MOU for a Service First agreement that addresses co-management of the Las Cienegas watershed, including Las Cienegas National Conservation Area and part of the Nogales Ranger District. The agreement keeps Las Cienegas NCA management intact but adds Forest Service capacities and team leadership. The BLM TFO will provide collaborative planning expertise to the Coronado National Forest. The goal is common management objectives and successes across boundaries.

#### **3. SUBJECT: National Public Lands Day**

**ISSUE SUMMARY:** The Tucson Field Office (TFO) will be participating in two National Public Lands Day events this year. On September 11, the TFO will join with its partner the Empire Ranch Foundation during the organization’s annual western Roundup event at Las Cienegas National Conservation Area. The half-day event celebrates western culture and the historic aspects of the area. BLM plans a booth, and several on-the-ground activities to bring attention to volunteerism and BLM’s plans for the area. On October 23, another National Public Lands Day volunteer opportunity will take place at two recreation sites along the Middle Gila River, north of Wilkelman. Volunteers will pick up trash, place vehicle barriers, plant a few riparian trees, and make rustic fire rings at camp sites.

#### **4. SUBJECT: Tucson/San Pedro Riparian NCA Resource Management Plan**

**ISSUE SUMMARY:** The Tucson Field Office staff is putting the final touches on a Preparation Plan for this Resource Management Plan that would cover all of the lands managed by the Tucson Field Office excluding areas where a plan has been completed (Las Cienegas NCA) or in progress (Ironwood Forest National Monument). This includes the San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area where a stand-alone Resource Management Plan is required. Depending on 2005 funding, these two RMP efforts will



be prepared under one Environmental Impact Statement. Public scoping is anticipated for the fall of 2005.

**Lake Havasu Field Office Manager Report**

**Summary:** Lake Havasu Field Office staff is working on land use planning document. They are working with local groups and public.